



Fear of Missing Out on Workplace: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a term defined as the fear of being left behind. FOMO is not unique to a certain age group. It is experienced by anyone of any age group who has low levels of self-esteem and self-compassion and high levels of loneliness. So, it is likely that FOMO can be experienced not only by digital natives but also by digital immigrants such as parents, teachers, or grandparents. Although it has been mentioned that FOMO is not limited to certain age groups, a common research gap is that FOMO-related studies have mostly been conducted on adolescent populations and young adults/college students. FOMO on Workplace is the fear of losing career opportunities compared to other employees when on vacation or not working. This study aims to collect and analyze research related to FOMO conducted in the working adult population, especially employees/workers. In order to become one of the sources of information for professional organizations in providing interventions to employees either in personal or professional development. This study was a systematic review. The search was conducted using Google Scholar search on the Publish or Perish application with Publication name aimed at Elsevier, Sage, and Springer. This insight shows that FOMO was not only a relevant phenomenon for young people, teenagers, and students but also among workers.

Keywords: *Fear of Missing Out; Employees; FOMO Workplace*

Introduction

In this digital age, there is a phenomenon called fear of missing out (FOMO). FOMO is a term popularized by Patrick McGinnis in 2004 at Harvard Business School which is defined as the fear of being left behind (McGinnis, 2019). FOMO is not unique to a certain age group. It is experienced by anyone of any age group who has low levels of self-esteem and self-compassion and high levels of loneliness (Barry & Wong, 2020). The tendency to compare oneself to others and the fear of being outdated have been around for a long time. However, the ease of knowing other people's lives through social media in this digital age has a more destructive impact on individual mental health (Barry & Wong, 2020). So it is likely that FOMO can be experienced not only by digital natives but also by digital immigrants such as parents, teachers, or grandparents.

FOMO is the pervasive worry that one's life is not as enjoyable as other people's (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Individuals who experience FOMO feel that other people's lives that they see on social media are more fun and begin to compare themselves with their own lives. So FOMO is synonymous

with wanting to stay connected to what other people are doing. FOMO can be explained using self-determination theory (Przybylski et al., 2013). Unmet psychological needs are a factor in a person's vulnerability to unhealthy experiences including experiencing FOMO. The basic psychological needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is the need for individuals to regulate their own experiences and actions (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Autonomy is a form of functioning that relates to feelings of volition, congruence, and integration. Autonomy is considered a sense of voluntariness, therefore autonomy is not the same as independence. People can be autonomously or autonomously dependent depending on the context and behavior involved. The hallmark of autonomy is that one's behavior is self-supported or in accordance with one's authentic interests and values. When acting with autonomy, behaviors are performed wholeheartedly, and an individual experiences inner conflict when doing things against his or her own will. In SDT theory, competence refers to the basic human need to feel effectiveness and mastery (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In other words, competence is the human need to feel capable. Competence needs are manifested in the form of curiosity, manipulation, and various epistemic motives. Competence energizes a range of behaviors from playing games to discovering the laws of the universe. Competence is also diminished when challenges are too difficult, negative feedback is experienced, or undermined by interpersonal factors such as self-criticism and social comparison. Relatedness is the feeling of being socially connected. People feel related if they feel cared for by others. Relatedness is also a sense of belonging and feeling important among others. Thus, relatedness is feeling oneself as a person who gives or contributes to others (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

FOMO is not limited to the social media era. However, research shows that there is a positive relationship between social media use and one's level of FOMO (Elhai et al., 2018; Przybylski et al., 2013). Social media makes it easy for everyone to find out about each other's achievements, problems, opinions, and all aspects of life. On the positive side, it facilitates friendship. But on the other hand, it increases the potential for showing off and envy. Although it is not synonymous with a particular gender or age group, FOMO is higher in younger individuals (Przybylski et al., 2013). In relation to the use of social media, the young age group as digital natives do have a higher intensity of connecting with social media than the age group above.

Digital natives, the generation of young people born in the digital age, are assumed to be inherently tech-savvy. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, are those who learned to use computers at some stage during their adult lives (Wang et al., n.d.). But with the development of technology, changes in internet technology and computers that were once large and complicated have now become smartphones that are more accessible and always in the palm of the hand.

Although it has been mentioned that FOMO is not limited to certain age groups, a common research gap is that FOMO-related studies have mostly been conducted on adolescent populations (Alt & Boniel-nissim, 2018; Tomczyk & Lizde-Selmanagic, 2018) and young adults/college students (Hayran, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Rogers & Barber, 2019). Thus, the interventions provided are also limited to the young population. This study aims to collect and analyze research related to FOMO conducted in the working adult population, especially employees/workers. In order to become one of the sources of information for professional organizations in providing interventions to employees either in personal or professional development.

In this systematic review research, there are two research questions. The research questions arise from the results of the needs analysis of the selected topic in this case "FOMO on Workplace". The research questions are: 1) How does the FOMO research method or model on Workplace develop between 2015-2023? and 2) How does FOMO affects the work environment?

Method

This study is a systematic review. The search was conducted using Google Scholar search on the Publish or Perish application with publications namely Elsevier, Sage, and Springer. The reason why researchers chose Elsevier, Sage, and Springer is due to the consideration that the three journal sources are trusted and Scopus-indexed international journals. Publish or Perish software was used due to the efficiency of data search. Inclusions in this search are 1) articles from Elsevier, Sage, and Springer; 2) published in the range of 2015 – 2023; 3) articles about Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among employees; and 4) using English language. Exclusions in this search were 1) FOMO articles that were not on employees or workplaces and 2) articles in languages other than English. The stages in the data collection process include: 1) observation; 2) literature study; and 3) documentation (Handayani et al., 2023).

In the observation stage, researchers conducted data searches through Elsevier, Sage, and Springer through Publish or Perish software. At literature study stage, researchers conducted a data review study related to the systematic review method in articles obtained. This search found 188 articles from Elsevier, 95 articles from SAGE, and 300 articles from Spriger. Initial screening is carried out based on the exclusion criteria on the title, so that at this stage, the number of articles studied is 9 articles. The next step is to read the article in full, so find 7 articles that fit the criteria of inclusion. The selection stages are described in detail, as shown in Figure 1.

Results

This search found 188 articles from Elsevier, 95 articles from SAGE, and 300 articles from Springer. Initial screening was carried out based on the exclusion criteria in the title, so at this stage the number of articles studied was 9 articles. The next step was to read the article in full, so that 8 articles were obtained that met the inclusion criteria. The selection stages are described in detail, as shown in Figure 1.

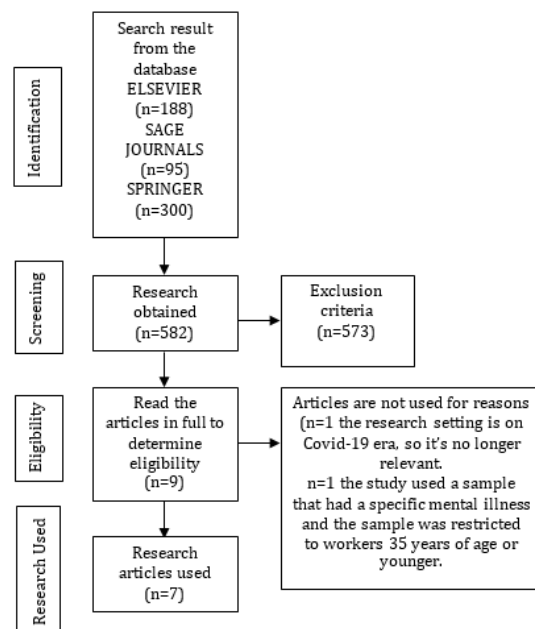


Figure 1 Search Result Chart

Selected studies were published between 2015 and 2023 with one study published in 2019 (Budnick et al., 2019), in 2020 there will be one research (Kumar & Lalatendu, 2020), in 2021 there were two researchs (Labban & Bizzi, 2021; Tandon et al., 2021), in 2022 there were two researchs (Gartner et al., 2022; Tandon et al., 2022), and in 2023 there were one research (Schuster et al., 2023). The research articles used are from United States (Budnick et al., 2019; Labban & Bizzi, 2021; Schuster et al., 2023; Tandon et al., 2021, 2022), India (Kumar & Lalatendu, 2020), and Austria (Gartner et al., 2022).

The data obtained in each research is the workers (Budnick et al., 2019), media professionals (Kumar & Lalatendu, 2020), working professionals (Tandon et al., 2021), employees (Labban & Bizzi, 2021; Tandon et al., 2022), SMEs (Gartner et al., 2022), and adult social media overusers (Schuster et al., 2023). A complete overview of the characteristics of the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research

Researcher, year of publication	Country	Research Data Source
Christopher J. Budnick, Arielle P. Rogers, Larissa K. Barber (2019)	United States	Workers
V. Vijay Kumar and Lalatendu Kesari Jena (2020)	India	Media professionals
Anushree Tandon, Amandeep Dhir, Nazrul Islam, Shalini Talwar, Matti Mäntymäki (2021)	United States	Working professionals
Alice Labban and Lorenzo Bizzi (2021)	United States	Employees
Johannes Gartner, Matthias Fink, Daniela Maresch (2022)	Austria	SMEs
Anushree Tandon, Amandeep Dhir, Shalini Talwar, Puneet Kaur, Matti Mäntymäki (2022)	United States	Employees
Amy M. Schuster, Shelia R. Cotten, and Dar Meshi (2023)	United States	Adult social media overusers

1.FOMO on Workplace Research Developments between 2015-2023

In the time span of 2015-2023 in Elsevier, Sage, and Springer journals, it was found that the earliest research on FOMO in the workplace was in 2019 (Budnick et al., 2019). Workplace FOMO research in 2019 was conducted to measure and seek validation of FOMO in various employees and MBA students and measure the effect of workplace FOMO on the health and motivation of employees. The results show that workplace FOMO affects work burnout and message-checking behavior during working hours but does not affect occupational well-being.

The second study in 2020 was conducted to measure the influence of media consumption behavior on the personal well-being of media working professionals from different domains (Kumar & Lalatendu, 2020). The results showed that media consumption plays a significant role in the well-being of working professionals. In line with previous research, the third study in 2021 was conducted to determine the effect of FOMO in the workplace on employee performance and procrastination (Tandon et al., 2021). The results showed that FOMO was significantly associated with compulsive social media use, which

significantly affected individual performance decline and procrastination. Meanwhile, the results of the fourth study in 2021 show that employee communication via social media makes employees feel happy and tired at the same time (Labban & Bizzi, 2021).

In support of previous research, the forth research conducted in 2022 showed that FoMO may encourage employees to focus their attention on keeping up with their social group rather than on work-related efforts of their social group rather than on work-related endeavors (Tandon et al., 2022). However, employees are preoccupied with their smartphones and social media use, which can strain their mental capacity to process information related to work and social media, and thus cause them to experience burnout. In addition to the relationship with mental well-being, in 2022 research on FOMO in the workplace was conducted to assess the effect of FOMO on the ability to make work-related decisions (Gartner et al., 2022). There is an influence of FOMO bias in the individual decisions of corporate decision-makers in implementing new manufacturing technologies in the company. The process of regulating psychological well-being makes individuals experience higher levels of FOMO to imitate their coworkers. However, this may decrease with experience. The lower the experience of SME decision makers, the tighter the FOMO in the intention to use new technology, and vice versa. Emotions influence the intention to use new technology as well as subsequent decisions, including FOMO which holds SME decision-makers hostage. So that FOMO bias does not only occur in consumers but also decision-makers in producers. Research in 2023 is also in line with research in previous years. The research was conducted on working adults (Schuster et al., 2023). The results showed that they felt pressured to always respond to work emails quickly.

2. The Influence of FOMO in The Work Environment

FOMO in the workplace is different from FOMO in general. In general, FOMO is defined as a pervasive concern that others may have a rewarding experience that one does not have. (Przybylski et al., 2013). General FOMO is experienced by anyone in the context of general social relationships. Whereas FOMO on Workplace is the fear of losing career opportunities compared to other employees when on vacation or not working (Budnick et al., 2019). FOMO on Workplace consists of two interrelated components, namely informational exclusion and relational exclusion. The presence of FoMO in the work environment also showed a moderate relationship with the level of work engagement, as well as a less significant relationship with all three components of organizational commitment. Workplace FoMO was associated with affective commitment, whereas FoMO in general showed no such relationship. Workplace FoMO relates to employees' organizational commitment, job involvement, and engagement with work-related technology use.

Factors that influence Workplace FOMO include compulsive use of social media, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and experience (Gartner et al., 2022; Kumar & Lalatendu, 2020; Tandon et al., 2021). Just like General FOMO, workers who are overloaded with information will experience higher levels of Workplace FOMO. Workers will feel stress, disrupted family relationships and even the intention to change jobs. Although workers are afraid of missing out on work-related information if they are not always connected, the urge to show off is stronger than the desire to know the situation of others. But when it comes to making work-related decisions, related experiences tend to reduce Workplace FOMO bias.

The impact of Wokplace FOMO tends to be counterproductive work behaviors including decreased individual performance, procrastination, bias in decision making and phubbing at work (Gartner et al., 2022; Labban & Bizzi, 2021; Tandon et al., 2021, 2022). However, Workplace FOMO has a different impact on senior and junior workers based on experience. Based on experience, senior workers are better able to manage their time accessing media than junior workers (Kumar & Lalatendu, 2020). In contrast to Kumar's results, Schuster's research says that established adults are caught in a career and parenting crisis when trying to balance relationships with social ties, especially family, and their

workplace, by using their cell phones at least several times a day (Schuster et al., 2023). The inability to completely disconnect from the phone during work hours. Unrestricted access leads to the possibility of distracting impromptu work, which often occurs during family time, and can contribute to the feeling of not being able to escape work during personal time. Workplace FOMO behaviors that cause workplace burnout are only triggered by social media communication with friends, not with coworkers (Labban & Bizzi, 2021). When workers interact with friends, topics of conversation tend to be unrelated to work, leading to distractions, which cause conflicts that lead to burnout. Communication through social media makes people more likely to support others and organizations, and less likely to put effort into work. These insights suggest that FOMO is not only a relevant phenomenon for young people, adolescents, and students (Alt & Boniel-nissim, 2018; Hayran, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Rogers & Barber, 2019; Tomczyk & Lizde-Selmanagic, 2018) but also among workers.

Conclusion

Workplace FOMO is the fear of losing career opportunities compared to other employees when on vacation or not working, which consists of two components, namely informational exclusion and relational exclusion. Factors that influence Workplace FOMO include compulsive social media use, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and experience. The impact of Workplace FOMO tends to be counterproductive work behaviors including decreased individual performance, procrastination, bias in decision making and phubbing at work. However, Workplace FOMO has a different impact on senior workers and junior workers based on their experience.

Workers are also caught in a career and parenting crisis when unable to fully disconnect from their phones after work hours. Workplace FOMO behaviors that cause workplace burnout are only triggered by social media communication with friends, not co-workers. When workers interact with friends, the topics of conversation tend to be unrelated to work, triggering distraction, which leads to conflicts that cause burnout. Communication through social media makes people more likely to support others and organizations, and less likely to put effort into work.

This insight shows that FOMO is not only a relevant phenomenon for young people, teenagers, and students but also among workers. So it is hoped that authorities such as HRD, Supervisors, or Group Coordinators can pay attention to Workplace FOMO bias towards their members.

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